

PASSIVE  
PURCHASE

A WILL AND WAY TO PEACE!

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*by*

Theodore N. Kaufman

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# PASSIVE PURCHASE

by

MESSAGE

**Theodore N. Kaufman**

CHAIRMAN

American Federation of Peace



Newark, N. J.

— 1939 —

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FOREWORD.

These are troublous times. . . . Confusion and chaos becloud most national and international issues. On all sides the patriot must face a tirade of accusations. Though he may be personally honest and sincere in his work he is, none the less, subject to a barrage of such epithets as, "Nazi", "Communist", "Profiteer", "War-Monger" and other names less kind! Therefore the author of this **PASSIVE PURCHASE PLAN** wishes here to declare that the plan was evolved in strict accordance with the following premise:

"That I remain firm and uncompromising in my belief that there can be no sincere plan devised by man for public welfare and betterment which cannot be obtained by the American People in absolute accordance with the principles of government as enumerated in our Declaration of Independence and established as law by our Constitution!"

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## Passive Purchase

## TO SERVE, OR NOT TO SERVE?

"O! ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa hath long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger....O! America receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind!"

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"What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated".

Such faint-hearted words are not those which should be used in these times by men representing our people and governing the greatest country on this earth. Those are words of indecision. Those are words which may be uttered by the governing body of a Balkan or Danubian country. But Americans live neither in the Balkans nor along the Danube!

The Atlantic ocean is very real. In order for our country to be invaded that ocean would have to be crossed. Not by one or a dozen airplanes. Not by a handful of men. Not by a score of ships. That ocean would have to be crossed by ten million men, in ten thousand ships! And is it to be expected that those men, in such ships, would find Americans asleep in their homes? No—to ignore this fact is to try, by verbal hocus-pocus, to pull the wool over the eyes of the common people. To say that we are only thirty hours from Europe may be the truth as applied to a single instance but to employ such logic as the basis of our fighting for any European nation is pure fiction.

"**T**hough **T**en **t**o **o**ne **w**e **g**o **t**o **w**ar!" It may be conceived that such a statement might be the utterance of a child unacquainted with the horrors and wastes of war. But imagine such a statement from the mouth of a man supposedly representing a large body of American citizens in Congress! Is a man sent to our Capitol to wager bets on the lives, homes and security of our citizens as though we were race horses or gamecocks? Are those the words of a matured mind or are they the words of a mind at the age akin to that of an infant playing with toy soldiers?

(Quoted from the Writings of Thomas Paine)

We are not questioning nor have we the least doubt in the staunch patriotism and loyalty of our elected representatives. We know that as Americans they are both true and loyal to their country. Nor do we suggest that all of our representatives are faint of heart. But at this time, in our country, there should not be any at all who might believe that they can, either alone or as a group, refuse to heed the voice and obey the mandate of the common people. Especially when and if that mandate is expressed by an overwhelming majority.

A group of mothers recently visited a member of the Senate. They were met with a gruff "I don't care what the mothers think, I'll vote the way I want to!" Can our public servants have grown so sated and complacent with power, that they can ignore the entreaties of the people who elected them and whom they are supposed to serve? Or can they imagine that by being elected to Congress, they have entered into a world remote and removed from the common people? A story once told me is there analogous:

In Damascus lived a poor beggar, Hassim. It was his daily custom to hobble through the streets of that city; his eyes glued to the ground, his stick carefully picking the way over the torturous road. Here and there he would occasionally be of some service to others. One day a merchant whom he had once helped died and willed to Hassim a beautiful camel. Immediately Hassim was a changed man. No longer did he walk along the street visiting his brothers. No longer was he careful to watch his path. He now spent his time riding atop the camel, not deigning to cast a glance at anyone. In fact he was so vain-glorious in his pride that he one day forgot to guide the camel and the poor beast whose reins were being held too high, suddenly stumbled and fell. Hassim died of a broken neck!

#### WHERE ART THOU, O COMMON TOUCH?

Why is it that as soon as most men are elected to Congress they are prone to such radical change in their perspective? Is it the honor and luster of their new office which causes the change? Is it a smug feeling of self-importance?

And when they return to their constituency they may be engaged as a speaker in small groups or restricted clubs. And there they speak of this or that; recount a lusty anecdote; exchange banter with several prominent members and all in all, have a fine time. For which they are patted on the back and called a "swell guy"; more often than not by social hypocrites! And so he off to bed, right proud of himself!

But how often does he go into factories and get the views of the working man from that man's own lips? Or even stop at hot-dog stands and question some of the common people who may be gathered there? Or meet with some student body during their lunch period and so capture the thoughts of American youth?

Absurd? Too much work? If so then where then get the views of our great common people? And if their personal and uncensored views are not gotten and expounded in the halls of our Congress then what chance has our democracy to really endure? If the actions of our representatives are being propelled ahead at a great speed, above and over the views and will of the people, what may happen if one day the gulf separating them becomes too wide to bridge with pretty phrases and flimsy excuses?

The bond between the people and their elected representatives must be real and deep, honest and sincere. Otherwise a feeling of fatalism, will overtake the people; they will be mentally weakened and physically disgusted to such an extent that they will no longer be strongly or personally interested in the proper functioning and purposes of their government. And when such a feeling is sufficiently profound the time would be ripe for the exploitation of the people by the inception of a foreign ism, dictator or a group of power-ridden autocrats. And if such a time ever came, and the people were then aroused to defend themselves, they surely would have recourse to principles other than those established by our Constitution, and to weapons stronger than words or phrases! May that day never be born!

#### LEFT, RIGHT OR CENTER?

Those who believe implicitly in the foundations and processes of democracy are today arrived at the crossroads of civilization. Along the roads to the left and to the right parade a galaxy of beautiful and seductive sirens whispering soft words of love with tongues coated with deceitful utopias and spoken through teeth blackened with the decay of paganism and barbarism. Their allurements are many; their kiss death. Death to every decent precept of life. Death to Freedom.

On the road straight ahead one sees no such fantasy. No sirens parade along this rough paved road. On this road are gruff but honest men offering nothing to those who would join them. Nothing that is, except a clean way of living; a spade with which to help build a better world; and the clangor of the Liberty bell sounding in the workers ears!

There is little to choose between communism and fascism. The former makes use of the tools of barbarism in order to manufacture a synthetic civilization; the latter uses the tools of civilization in order to reestablish a pagan and barbaric state. Both systems may be compared to an advanced stage of cancer in the body of a person. One has little to choose between a cancer in the stomach, or one in the kidneys. Both are incurable. Both produce untold agony and suffering to the inflicted body and mind. And like cancer, no temporary or partial operation will serve to save the patient. It will die; die of itself.

And our democracy, is it entirely healthy? I do not think so. Not that I indict it. It is merely sick, not guilty. Nor do I contend that there is anything organically or fatally wrong or incurable in the principles of the system. That system is basically strong and sound. But, to put it mildly, it is subject to an occasional disease like measles or whooping cough. It is not a fatal condition, nor necessarily an alarming one. But it must have attention. If not, if it is left to cure itself it may become a victim of hypothetical cures or patent medicines. And that might be fatal!

At the present time I believe that we are suffering from a bad case of "governmentalitis". You will not find that word in the dictionary but its meaning is apparent since it is a condition of which the common people of America have all too suddenly become aware.

Take a stroll along the street and question at random some of the people you may meet, about our government. They may be surprised at being accosted but they will not bite you. Listen to them speak the word "our government". They use that term as though it were the name of a planet laying far off the orbit of the earth. As far removed from them, individually, as the mythical pot of gold at the end of the rainbow!

And why should they speak in such fashion? It defeats in both principle and fact, the basis on which our government is established and may hope to endure. And in that "our government" we find one of the chief ingredients with which to brew a definite peace.

#### AH, PEACE!

Peace! No man, woman or child, lives who has not heard the word! Throughout the ages it has been a subject of more discussion than any other single problem of mankind. Great authors have written brilliant volumes about peace; in the halls of government great orators have loudly proclaimed its virtues; the great prophets of

every religion on earth have preached its gospel and its benefits to the people. And in all the world peace is the one common denominator that melds the people of all nations, of all races together in common thought and prayer.

It is therefore, no longer necessary to condition people to the idea of peace; five thousand years of written letters and spoken words have accomplished that purpose. By reason of that very fact we are consequently faced with one of the chief obstacles in the path of peace; the thought and hope is so old that the people of all nations have been overconditioned to both its meaning and attainment; to such an extent that its fruit has long since allowed to become overripe and unplucked. Today peace is something more illusory than real; its fancy more pleasant to dwell upon than its actual realization!

Thus the people are neither seeking a definition to the meaning of peace, nor further conjecture upon its hypothesis. They know the answer to the former, and are tired of hearing an exposition on the latter. They are no longer asking "What?", but "HOW?". They do not want a theory. They want a definite formula!

There exist scores of fine organizations devoted to the quest of peace. The majority of them are sincere and honest in their work. But their efforts are bent more upon promoting peace than upon helping the common people attain it. However, to promote an idea which is as old as the world itself, is a waste of time and money. More, it diverts the useful energies of its workers into dead-end channels.

Then too, their chief tools of statistics and shock have long since lost their keenness and become dulled. To feed the common people with statistics when their hearts are bleeding is like trying to tell a man to watch his neighbors house while his very own is burning. As for shock, death and tragedy always seem remote when it does not immediately strike at home.

Proper education at an early age would, of course, help immeasurably. Training of the mind that is, not the heart and soul. The home will take care of the former, the church the latter. In training that mind the foolish vanity and proud virility of man which gives birth to a fear psychoses should be unmasked and held up to ridicule. Call it by any name you choose, it is still this fear psychoses, the fear of man being branded a slacker, which drives him into a war which he does not want and which he knows will not help him, his family or his country! However, these are problems with

which the teacher of the future may contend. Such a program will not help us now. The majority of the common people are no longer in school!

Another error into which peace organizations fall are their promotion of peace programs on an international scale. Someday perhaps, a worldwide peace may be a reality but the fact must be faced that the world will never, spontaneously, fall into a miraculous lust of peace. That is not merely fantasy; it is contrary to the laws of nature.

Peace, like a tree, must grow slowly and naturally. It must first plant its root in one country; from its fruited branches seeds will then fall and find their own way to other fertile soils. Nature and the pulse and conscience of mankind will there take care of its growth and flowering. By like process, it remains for the common people of one country to plant that root by devising and employing such a method of registering their will for peace that would be more powerful and effective than the individual or combined inclinations and opposite desires of their leaders. But if the goal is to achieve peace, then the method must be a peaceful one. Peace can never be achieved at the point of a sword.

If such a method is employed its flame will spread quickly into other lands. And by the use of that same method the common people will not only be able to assure a peace for themselves but will also be able, by the use of the same fulcrum, to uproot any dictatorship under which they may be harnessed!

#### HERE, AND NOW!

The United States would undoubtedly be the logical starting point of such a movement. It is the strongest and wealthiest country in the world and its common people the most intelligent and enlightened. Therefore any will for peace which the American people might express will not be interpreted by the people of other nations as a sign of physical weakness, financial despair or political discontent. It will be a case of Atlas extending a hand to Hercules!

Today our people have become more or less familiar with the causes of war and the many false arguments volunteered them as reasons for their embarking upon a bloody crusade of pseudo-righteousness. We are acquainted with the michaevillian machinations of war-profiteers, munition-muckers, foreign agents and foreign propaganda. And with the methods used by the termite lobbyists in our Capitol. All of these are bent on accomplishing their aims

regardless of the peoples gore which splashes on their conscience. Regardless of the havoc and waste caused a nation.

It is apparent therefore that if the common people are to wield a weapon its edge must be sharp enough to cut clear through such a nefarious web of selfish greed and lust. And in order to achieve its purpose without causing destruction to its wielder that weapon would have to be a lawful one and one which would not destroy the basic principles upon which our democracy is poised. The method used must once and for all times remind our Congress, in definite and decisive terms, that they are not meant to be an entity unto themselves but have been sent to the Capitol solely in order to serve and represent the people. And that when a time arrives when the great majority of the people are loudly and clearly expressing their mandate, that mandate would have to be obeyed, whether they, the representatives, are in personal accord with it or not.

It is also patent that that method, if it is to be effective and at the same time be spontaneously employed by a majority of the common people would have to be so simple in structure that every man, woman and child in the nation would be able to grasp its significance and apply it without effort, cost or bloodshed. It would have to be a method which cures the ailing tree by injecting a curative into its roots, not by tearing off its leaves. Now to that method!

Domestic commerce and industry form the backbone of our great national wealth. Compared to it, our foreign trade is a mere drop in the bucket. Compared to it the business of any single manufacturer, retailer or wholesaler is negligible. But however great our commerce and industry they are but a matter of second consideration as compared to the lives, homes, welfare and health of our common people!

The people elect representatives to express and vote the will of their majority. For one or for many reasons such representatives often fail to do so. When this occurs what recourse have the people of correcting and impressing their opinions, wishes and will upon their representatives? Let us review some of them.

They have the right of petitioning their representatives by letters or telegrams. Sometimes they are loaned the use of the medium of press and radio. Sometimes they are enabled to personally visit their representatives. They also have the right of ballot, but since they can only exercise that right at times specified by law they cannot employ such means to halt or change the outcome of any major issue concerning national welfare when that issue faces

our Congress at times other than election. Have they the right therefore to seek other means? Certainly! The basis of our government is clearly defined. "For the people, by the people, and of the people".

If one is sincere in ones belief in democracy and accepts such a pronouncement in its full literal sense that statement will not lend itself of ambiguous interpretation.

#### SO, WHAT?

If then the methods available to the people are either arbitrary or of no use whatsoever; if all the letters and entreaties and tears of the common people are of no avail; if all the statistics proving that war is sheer folly and waste fall upon deaf ears, what are the people to do in order to impose their will?

Revolt? No! Never! In these times revolution is an outmoded and retrogressive process employed and preached only by men bent on securing power for themselves and heartlessly indifferent to the bloodshed and suffering it causes the common people, and the havoc wreaked upon the nation. It is a process which no man, living under and believing faithfully in the system of democracy would employ if he were sincerely bent on evolving a remedy that would be both lawful and constitutional. Revolution, the doctrine of civil force, is therefore not such a remedy. In fact, to suggest, preach or employ revolution as a cure is analogous to the story of the young American physician who was sent to help some eskimos. The first thing that struck him upon examining them was the thick layer of dirt, the accumulation of a lifetime, that had gathered on their skins. Irate at the existence of such a condition he immediately ordered them to take a bath. They obeyed him. But their pores were not used to being opened so suddenly and shortly afterwards they caught pneumonia and died! Patently, the remedy must always be consonant with the ability of the people to absorb and apply it, sans tyranny, sans bloodshed!

In what language can we speak, what manner can we employ in order to be heard? Words are ignored. Weapons are ruled out. Are we then to remain speechless and defenseless? No! Not while we have recourse to a language which every single one of our inhabitants can speak, and which none of our representatives can afford, for long, to ignore. That is the language of our pocket-books!

#### PASSIVE PURCHASE!

Money talks! In impoverished countries those words have the ring of an epigram; in our country it is a mere statement of fact!

But it can be made, and should be made, to do more than merely talk. It has the power, and if necessary should be made, to make itself felt!

The majority of our common people are grouped into thousands of organized clubs and associations. The membership rosters include mothers, fathers, sons and daughters, war veterans, fraternists, housewives, women investors, etc. At the outset, these groups will suffice to put the **PASSIVE PURCHASE PLAN** into operation. They will later be joined by people not members of such groups. Their slogan may be "SAVE YOUR MONEY AND YOU SAVE YOUR COUNTRY FROM WAR!"

The leaders of the federation should designate, in advance, a two weeks period during which its members would be enjoined to spontaneously curtail, to the fullest extent, their purchase of domestic goods. No boycott will be urged. The plan distinctly says: "Purchase" and provides for a curtailment, not a boycott; and no signs or banners inciting them to boycott should be tolerated. Especially since concerted boycott movements are declared unlawful in many of our states. The members, and the public at large will be enjoined to exercise self-willed and self-imposed limited purchasing of goods. They will be enjoined to "save their money!" Every person has that right! They may purchase goods or not as they wish. They may save their money if they will! Neither is a crime! Are not the people, in a multitude of diverse advertisements daily cautioned to save their money? And have such cautions ever been declared undemocratic, unconstitutional or subversive in character? No! The common people will simply put a pin on their pocketbooks for a limited time. No pledges to sign, no dues to pay. No resort to force or coercion! They have their money and their lives! Certainly no people could ever be asked to do so little in order to accomplish so much!

Acting in such a manner, the people should thus present their governing body with a FAIT ACCOMPLI of a single-purposed, numerically and financially powerful PEACE UNITY. If such a Fait Accompli is established in time it would be the means of nipping in the bud, any desire or inclination any representative or group might have of voting to send our people into a war of aggression. Such a Fait Accompli would put an end to any indecisiveness and vacillation with which our government may be stricken.

If, by now, the **PASSIVE PURCHASE PLAN** has not unfolded itself to you in all its magnitude let us see what possibilities it might have in actual operation:

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Our total foreign commerce, imports and exports, amount to approximately three Billion dollars yearly. Our total domestic commerce amounts to about seventy-five billions a year. Thus in a **two weeks period** our domestic commerce would equal, and perhaps exceed, the **yearly total of foreign trade**.

During that two weeks period the people keep their purses closed. What will happen? How long could it be before organized labor would join the people in their demands for a peace declaration? How long would it be before every retail establishment and peace-time-thriving industry would join the people? And if those three groups combine their wealth, resources and organizations with the people standing solidly alongside them would they not be strong enough to compete with any single or combination of foreign agencies, war-profiteers and war-mongers in the lobby of our government? Certainly they would; in themselves they represent the major portion of our nations wealth, resources and inhabitants. To pass legislation against their combined will would be an oligarchic, dictatorial action!

And how would the governing body then compensate for or explain the loss? It would take a great deal more than hot air! And to whom would they address themselves? To the people, who have caused it? To labor? To commerce? To industry? But they are all participating, willingly, in the movement! Appeal to the armed forces? But there is no disorder! To the police? But no laws are being broken!

Can they exhort the people to "go to Europe" and save our foreign commerce when our domestic commerce is at stake?

Can they exhort the people to "go to Europe and fight to save our Democracy" when at the very moment the people are defending and protecting that democracy at home?

Can they pass a law making it mandatory for the people to **spend their money?** Not unless they first tear up the Constitution!

Or will they assure the common people of America, in precise language, that "The United States has no national interest and will not participate in a foreign war unless our territory is attacked!"

Such plain, blunt language was the kind used by the pioneers who built this nation. Can it not also be used by those developing it?

That could be a great moment in our history! That would be a moment proving that "government of the people, by the people, for the people" is not a myth in practise.

#### AMERICAN FEDERATION OF PEACE

The American Federation of Peace is a non-profit, non-political, non-Communist, non-Fascist, non-subversive organization. It is not strictly pacifist. It believes in the strongest possible military defense of the United States. It believes that it becomes the immediate duty of every American citizen to defend his country, without question in the event of **actual territorial invasion** by any foreign military force. However, it does not believe that it is **bounden duty** of any American citizen to defend the economic or political imperialism of any foreign power on any foreign shores. It believes that by keeping absolutely aloof from foreign wars and entanglements the American People face a **truly great future**.

In that dream of the future we visualize the wealth and efforts of our great nation being used to house, feed, clothe and educate every one of its citizens; Nor do we believe that such a dream is a mirage. Its realization depends chiefly on the honesty, sincerity and integrity of those men elected by the people to represent them. And in these representatives never losing "the common touch".

And that all—**LIFE, LIBERTY and PURSUIT of HAPPINESS** can be maintained and developed under the popular slogan of a government honestly and truly "by the people, for the people and of the people".